

Being Prepared for Evacuation

Before and During Fire Season

Evacuation from a wildfire is the first and most important step the public can take in protecting themselves and their family. Evacuation during a wildfire is the primary responsibility of the Police Department and cooperating law enforcement agencies. Still, areas to evacuate and evacuation routes are typically determined from information received by the Fire Department units responding, based on fire behavior conditions and fire movement.



- ☐ Prepare a Red Cross "Family Disaster Plan" that includes a Family Communication Plan. Do not rely on cell phone for your communication plan. Select a meeting place outside the high fire hazard area.
- ☐ Prepare an Evacuation Plan using your existing road system. Plan at least two escape routes. Fire travels quickly so never plan to run or walk away from a fire.
- ☐ Assemble a Red Cross "Family Disaster Supplies Kit" with enough basic supplies to sustain you and your family for 3 days.
- ☐ Pack a "To Go" container of important items to take during an evacuation. It should include medications, important documents, inventory of household goods, and insurance papers. Or even better, keep important documents and keepsakes in a Safe Deposit Box.
- ☐ Use the Red Cross "Pets and Disasters" to plan how to transport and prepare your pets during a wildfire.
- ☐ Make an inventory of household goods. Videotape or photograph model numbers and contents of drawers. Put this in your "To Go" container.
- ☐ If you are not home when an evacuation order is issued, you cannot return. Arrange for a "buddy" to act in your behalf.
- ☐ Designate volunteer "lookouts" in your neighborhood to monitor radio, TV, or scanners during fire season and to activate a neighborhood phone tree, especially if a Red Flag Fire Alert is issued.
- ☐ Identify neighbors with disabilities and trouble-shoot barriers to their quick evacuation. Use "Buddy" system.

- ☐ Check with your child's school on their Student Release policy. They should have plans to protect children in place or to bus them to safer locations. Include in "Family Disaster Plan".

How to Evacuate



- ☐ Don't wait to be told to evacuate. Evacuate early! Do not wait to see what may happen. Waiting may endanger your ability to evacuate safely.
- ☐ Obey law enforcement and fire officers and drive calmly.
- ☐ Do not block access roads for fire trucks.
- ☐ Tune to the Emergency Alert System on most radio or TV stations (1250 AM or local TV networks are best bets).
- ☐ Evacuate to your families prearranged meeting place as outlined in your "Family Disaster Plan" or check in at an Evacuation Center established by the Red Cross.

When Fire Threatens



- ☐ Remain calm and remember that you have planned well.
- ☐ Do not call 9-1-1 for information. Monitor your local news or scanner.

- ☐ Load your "To Go" containers and "Family Disaster Supplies Kit" into your vehicle.
- ☐ Back your car into the driveway (not in garage). Leave keys in the ignition and carry an extra set. Close your garage door and leave it unlocked. Disconnect the garage door opener.
- ☐ Participate in the phone tree to alert and check on "buddy" or neighbors who may need help.
- ☐ Wear protective clothing: a long sleeved cotton or wool shirt, long cotton pants, and heavy work boots. Put a bandana or particle mask around your neck. Have goggles and leather work gloves.

And if there's time....Before You Evacuate



- ☐ Be sure all windows and doors are closed.
- ☐ Connect hoses to each exterior hose valve for firefighters.
- ☐ Move outside obstacles (patio furniture, grills, toys) away from the home to allow access for firefighters and to avoid wind blowing objects through windows.
- ☐ Remove flammable window shades and curtains and close metal shutters.
- ☐ Leave on exterior lights.

Sheltering In Place



Many people have chosen to stay and protect their property during a wildfire. The choice is ultimately up to you and requires considerable preplanning. Fire agencies cannot make that decision for you. Things you must consider are; your health, your family, water availability, topography around your property, previous fire behavior, building construction, home protection systems, defensible space, proper safety clothing, and ultimately what if things don't go according to your plan.